

belvedere

## JOSEPH REBELL IN SOUTHERN LIGHT

Lower Belvedere  
15 June to 13 November 2022



Joseph Rebell, *Sunset over the Campi Flegrei Looking towards the Islands Procida and Ischia*, 1819  
Photo: Johannes Stoll / Belvedere, Vienna

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**Joseph Rebell captured the sunlight of Italy on canvas. Born in Vienna in 1787, he spent many years in Milan, Rome, and, most notably, on the Gulf of Naples. He not only established himself as an influential artist and a source of inspiration, he also pioneered the transformation of the Belvedere into a modern art museum. This first solo exhibition fills a research gap in Joseph Rebell's work and at the same time celebrates the institution's own history.**

*General Director Stella Rollig: „Joseph Rebell was a pioneer in more ways than one. Not only do his paintings continue to inspire, he also built his career on the art market in a way that continues to define what an independent artist looks like today. In his capacity as a Belvedere director, he transformed the former summer palace into a progressive museum. While a look at the artist offers a reflection of our own institutional history, it also sheds light on one of the most influential artists of the time.“*

Joseph Rebell studied at the Vienna Academy of Fine Arts with Laurenz Jansch and received private instruction from landscape painter Michael Wutky. In 1810 he left Vienna to spend two years in Milan. From there, he traveled through northern Italy, capturing the scenery surrounding the lakes at Como, Lugano, and Maggiore in numerous watercolors. Having spent a short time in Rome, he settled in Naples in 1813 and gained international fame for his views of the Gulf of Naples, Ischia, Capri, Amalfi, and Sorrento.

Rebell's paintings tell of sunsets, shipwrecks, and storms at sea, and often prominently feature Mount Vesuvius. In addition to painting picturesque scenes, he also captured hidden corners along the coast of Naples as well as people working on the docks. Even today, Rebell's paintings, with their inventive use of light, remain compelling: they evoke

the feeling of gazing out a window. He captured the warmth of the sun and the clear sky with an intensity unprecedented in painting. This talent made him a role model over the years, especially influencing landscape painters such as those from Scuola di Posillipo. As a result, he attracted many buyers from all over Europe.

Curator Sabine Grabner: *„It is truly fascinating to see how Rebell gained access to some of the major figures of his time. While in Milan, he worked for Eugène de Beauharnais, then Viceroy of Italy. In Naples, he created paintings for Queen Caroline Murat and was a welcome guest at court. In Rome, where he lived from 1817, he gained the respect of travelers from many nations, which led to numerous commissions.“*

Ultimately, Austrian Emperor Franz I became aware of Joseph Rebell. He visited the artist in his Rome studio and commissioned him to paint four large-scale views of the area around Naples – these can still be seen at the Belvedere today.

### **Joseph Rebell as Director of the Imperial Painting Gallery at the Belvedere**

After having spent 14 years in Italy, Joseph Rebell returned to Vienna. Franz I appointed him to manage the Imperial Painting Gallery at the Upper Belvedere in 1824. The new director, in the short period before his early death in December 1828, managed to convert the prestigious summer palace into a modern museum.

During his tenure, Joseph Rebell ensured that the building's climate conditions were improved. This was accomplished by weather-proofing the exterior façade and installing a warm-air heating system. In addition, a new color scheme was introduced for the exhibition rooms, picture frames were labeled with names and biographical data of the artists, and paintings were gradually restored by academic painters.

Rebell also made a lasting impact on the art collection. He is credited with establishing the "Modern School," a department devoted to acquiring and showcasing contemporary art.

At the landscape painting department of the Imperial Academy, which he directed in addition to his work as director of the painting gallery, he advocated working from life.

Based on this and inspired by Rebell's pictures of the south, the next generation of artists studied the influence of light on the landscape. Thus, Rebell contributed greatly to the quality of Austrian landscape painting in the 1830s.

## **The Exhibition**

In this first solo exhibition on the life and work of Joseph Rebell, the Belvedere focuses primarily on his scenes from southern Italy but also highlights his early drawings, such as those of lakes in northern Italy, and the large-scale Arcadian landscape paintings from his artistic beginnings. Rebell's path is traced in stages, from his departure for Italy to his achievements in Naples and his time at the Belvedere, where he continued to paint in addition to being gallery director. During this final phase, he created for Emperor Franz I several paintings that can be seen today in the castles of Persenbeug and Artstetten, and which will be on display in the exhibition.

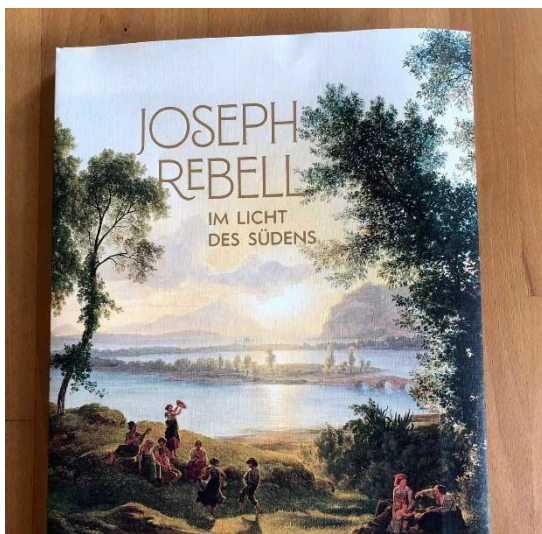
About 70 paintings and 40 drawings from public and private collections in Austria, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland are displayed for the first time in this exhibition. In addition, the Belvedere itself houses a comprehensive collection of Joseph Rebell's works, with a total of 23 of his paintings

## BIOGRAPHY

Born in Vienna as the son of a garment-maker on January 11, 1787.

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|-----------|---|
| 1799–1807 | Studies architecture and landscape drawing at the Academy of Fine Arts. Has private painting tuition with Michael Wutky.                            |
| 1810–12   | Draws at the northern Italian lakes. Receives commissions from the Viennese publisher Domenico Artaria and Eugène de Beauharnais, viceroy of Italy. |
| 1812      | Sojourn in Rome, during which time he spends several weeks in Naples.   |
| 1813–16   | Receives commissions from Queen Caroline Murat and wealthy, upper-class travelers.  |
| 1816      | Travels via Rome and Milan to Munich. Receives numerous commissions.  |
| 1817–24   | Lives and works at the Villa Malta. Receives Emperor Francis I of Austria in April 1819.  |
| 1824–28   | From September director of the Imperial Picture Gallery in the Upper Belvedere. Teaches landscape painting at the Academy of Fine Arts.             |
- Begins a journey to Dresden and Munich on October 11, 1828. Dies in Dresden on December 18, 1828, after a short illness.

## EXHIBITION CATALOGUE



### *Joseph Rebell. Im Licht des Südens*

Editors: Stella Rollig, Sabine Grabner  
Authors: Giovanna Capitelli, Udo Felbinger, Sabine Grabner, Katharina Januschewski, Luisa Martorelli, Stella Rollig, Karin Schneider, Andreas Stolzenburg

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## GUIDED TOURS AND PROGRAM

Please find updated information about our on-site program on our website:  
<https://www.belvedere.at/en/on-request-groups>

## GENERAL INFORMATION

<b>Exhibition Title</b>	Joseph Rebell. In Southern Light
<b>Exhibition Duration</b>	15 June to 13 November 2022
<b>Exhibition Location</b>	Lower Belvedere
<b>Exhibits</b>	83 works
<b>Curator</b>	Sabine Grabner
<b>Exhibition Management</b>	Tatjana Gawron-Deutsch
<b>Contact</b>	Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-0   <a href="http://www.belvedere.at">www.belvedere.at</a>
<b>Art Education</b>	Belvedere Art Education T + 43 1 795 57-134   M <a href="mailto:public@belvedere.at">public@belvedere.at</a>
<b>Press Contact</b>	Press Belvedere, Prinz Eugen-Straße 27, 1030 Vienna T +43 1 795 57-177   M <a href="mailto:press@belvedere.at">press@belvedere.at</a>

The current opening hours and ticket prices can be found on the website at [www.belvedere.at](http://www.belvedere.at)

*Further information and exhibition press photos are available to download at [belvedere.at/en/press](http://belvedere.at/en/press).*

**#JosephRebell**